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# THE KENTUCKY WARBLER

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NESTS OF DOVE AND ROBIN ON SAME BRANCH

Photo by Matt Brown

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Vol. 29 No. 3

August, 1953

## THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Founded in 1923 by

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## THE LARGE CONCENTRATION OF WILDFOWL WINTERING IN THE HENDERSON AREA

by W. P. RHOADS, Henderson

On Sunday, February 22, 1953 the writer accepted an invitation to accompany R. C. Soaper, Federal Game Management Agent, on a regular inspection trip of waterfowl along the Ohio River as far as the day's boatripe would permit us to travel and return by nightfall.

We boarded the Fish and Wildlife Service boat (named the Baldpate in honor of the skipper) before 8 a. m. at the Henderson dock and headed downstream. The weather was clear with bright sun and a temperature of 25° F. A wind was blowing from the north-west at the rate of 15-20 miles per hour and persisted for most of the day. The temperature remained at or below freezing.

The trip covered the river downstream for 35 miles past Henderson, Dead Man's and Diamond Islands, around Slim Island below Mt. Vernon, Indiana and back up past Henderson and Evansville to the Audubon Memorial Bridge and down to Henderson again. The river was at a stage of between 7 and 8 feet above normal low water level.

We went to see birds and that indeed we did! We saw more waterfowl than any one now living has ever seen in the territory.

One more general statement needs to be made here before we proceed further. There was a serious lack of rainfall during all of the fall and winter months so that all of the numerous sloughs and small streams were practically dry, and consequently did not furnish feeding grounds for the enormous waterfowl population. The waterfowl adopted another plan of living. They spent the days on the river and in the late afternoon flew out to corn and bean fields, to feed and returned to the river at daybreak or soon thereafter. Sometimes they flew as far as 15 or 20 miles distant from where they were found during the day.

It seems that the southern migration of waterfowl was late this season and that these birds did not begin to arrive in large numbers until the week of January 15, nor did they continue the journey southward, but remained here. The week of January 20-27, there was a 60 to 80% increase in their numbers. During the second week in February some of the returning species that were on the northward flight, joined those that had stopped here. This gave another boost to the population. By the day this trip was made some

evidence was beginning to be observed that some were continuing the northward migration. The Blacks and Mallards were definitely pairing off for the approaching breeding season.

As we rounded any bend in the river we always found ducks and geese and every stretch of still water had a considerable number. Several wildlife agents, who were brought into this region from even as far as northern Indiana and Illinois, estimated that numbers ranged from 80,000 to 130,000.

Of course, most of them were Mallards and Black Ducks, with some Pintails. An occasional Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, Ring-neck Duck or Lesser Scaup kept us on the alert. Several Coots were noted too. Present in large numbers were Canada Geese and we estimated them at approximately 10,000. On our way back, about 2 p. m., as we came around Black's Point, which is a very sharp bend, with an almost three-fourths of a complete turn; we found our largest flock of geese. They were on a sand bar which is located on the Kentucky side and is about a mile in length and averages fifty yards in width. Here, the long-necked honkers were preening and sunning themselves. Among the flock on the lower end of the sand bar was one goose that seemed to be nearly twice the size of the rest. It was also on the lower end of this bar that a flock of a few hundred Herring Gulls were enjoying the warm sunshine and shelter from the wind.

Where one finds ducks and geese in large concentrations, especially in winter, it is a good place to look for Bald Eagles. It was our rare pleasure to see four of these majestic creatures in the air at one time, just as we were coming into Mt. Vernon, Indiana.

Some miles above Diamond Island we put the boat into a little cove behind a big sand bar and found the usual ducks and geese, and to our surprise, three Great Blue Herons.

On the Indiana side opposite Black's Point, we found a goose flying with a steel-trap, stake and all fastened to its left foot. As one can well surmise this goose could neither swim nor fly well. When it alighted on the water it was easily scooped up with a dip net. We landed the goose; made a picture, removed the trap, and released it. The outer toe was broken and only a small amount of bleeding was noticed. It still had a lot of fight left for it had the trap-chain in its mouth when the picture was taken. (See Photo).

Above this location, we found a dead goose that had been so badly mutilated by opossums that we could find no

cause of death. Another, too weak to swim or fly well, was scooped up into a net, and brought to a pond where it could be fed. It is recovering rapidly.

The primary purpose of these inspection trips is to keep the Service Centers informed of the numbers and movements of these birds and also to be on the lookout for game violators. All small craft were stopped, checked for guns or evidence of waterfowl. One man informed us that it was becoming more difficult for him to remain a law-abiding citizen. From all reports there seems to have been very few cases of illegal shooting during the time of this unusual supply of game.

The skipper really demonstrated boatmanship and endurance on this trip. We met or passed nine big tow-boats and encountered their waves, ran narrow chutes, dodged driftwood, and made landings without a bit of trouble. The controls of the boat are so arranged that the operator must be standing when the boat is running. This trip required more than 8 hours of constant watchfulness along 70 miles of the crookedest part of the Ohio.

If seeing is believing, I have seen, but I just can not get my mind to accept the fact that there could be such a great concentration of waterfowl in one 35-mile stretch of river.

## MIGRATION OF BIRDS AT NIGHT

A Report by CHARLES STRULL

In the spring of 1948, members of the Beckham Bird Club contributed to the telescopic study of nocturnal migration of birds transiting the full moon, initiated by Dr. George H. Lowery, Curator of the Museum of Zoology of Louisiana State University. Louisville was one of about thirty stations distributed in the eastern half of the United States, Mexico and Canada, where telescopic observations were made. Murray was the only other station in Kentucky.

In April, 1948, at full moon period, we observed during three nights, embracing twenty hours, and in the following month of May we watched two nights during fourteen full hours. Murray's record shows two nights in April, with thirteen hours of observations, and none in May.

The data forwarded to Baton Rouge was subjected to mathematical analysis and calculations for the purpose of determining the hourly station flight densities. Flight density, as defined by Dr. Lowery, is "the number of birds passing over a line one mile long; and it may be calculated

from the number of birds crossing the segment of that line, included in an elliptical cross section of the cone of observation."

In a table of hourly densities in 1948 listed in the pamphlet, "A Quantitative Study of the Nocturnal Migration of Birds" by George H. Lowery, page 434, Louisville and Murray, each is credited with 2,000 birds per hour in April. That would indicate that Louisville and Murray recorded about the same number of flights in equal periods of time.

In May, Louisville is credited with a density of 700 birds per hour with the average of 1500 for the season.

Only Tampico and Yucatan stations near the Gulf of Mexico exceeded Louisville's record in April. In May, of the 17 stations listed, Louisville was right in the middle, 8 exceeded it and 8 below its density.

In the table of maximum hourly stations densities in April, 1948, Louisville is credited with 5,000 and Murray with 3,700; Knoxville, Tenn. with 5,800 is the only listed station in the United States that exceeded Louisville in this respect. In May, the 14 stations listed, Louisville ranked eighth.

In the table of maximum nightly densities with more than one night of observation, Louisville is credited with 17,000 in April and 8,400 in May; Murray with 16,000 in April. The two Kentucky stations have about the same records for April in the average hourly station's density category and in the maximum nightly density at stations with more than one night. Of the 10 stations listed for May, 4 stations had larger densities than Louisville in this classification.

Dr. Lowery, on several occasions, commended Louisville's contribution to the 1948 study.

In June, 1952, Robert J. Newman, Assistant Curator of the Museum at Louisiana State University, requested the writer to cooperate again in a more extensive study of nocturnal bird migration during the summer and fall seasons. The Beckham Bird Club promptly adopted the plan as a club project, again under the direction of the writer. A goodly number of members present at the June meeting volunteered as observers and recorders.

Using a 5-inch refractor telescope with a 60-power eye piece, we began the first observation the night of June 6, 1952. Bird flights passing the full moon were recorded on special sheets of paper. As soon as the observers called "bird" (occasionally a bat) the recorder with the aid of a flash light, noted the time, the point of entry on the lunar

disk which is considered as the dial of a clock; the point of exit from the moon, the focus, whether good, sharp, poor or indistinct; the apparent size of the bird in terms of the Crater Tycho; and additional information under REMARKS was noted. The observers reported whether the flight appeared straight, curved, zigzag or undulating.

Not expecting to see bird flights since it was past the spring migration, we were pleasantly surprised to count three bird flights during one and one-half hours of observation. On the night of June 8th (the night previous was cloudy) we recorded in one hour seven birds. Our average for both June nights was four per hour.

In the July lunar cycle, we observed on three nights for a total of five hours. We recorded in all twenty-six birds, an average of five plus per hour.

On August 4th and 5th during two and one-half hours, we recorded fifty birds, an average of twenty-three per hour. Were we seeing birds in early migration?

On the night of August 31st, we garnered sixty-eight birds in three and one-half hours, an average of twenty-eight birds per hour. We were convinced that seasonal migration was in progress.

Our conviction was strengthened on the night of September 2nd (on September 1st it was raining) when in four hours and thirteen minutes of observations, we listed two hundred ninety-eight birds, an average of seventy per hour. The observations continued until 3:13 a. m. On September 3rd, in six hours and twenty-three minutes we recorded two hundred fifty-one birds in flight, about forty per hour. We worked until 3:15 a. m. The following night in six and one-fourth hours at the telescope we had seventy-eight birds, an average of twelve plus per hour, and on September 5th, we checked ninety-six birds in seven hours, or an average of nearly fourteen per hour.

During the summer, the writer forwarded to Mr. Newman, geographical, topographical, and physiographic information in reference to the location of the observing station, its latitude and longitude; its three mile proximity to the Ohio River; proximity to Cherokee and Seneca Parks, their areas in acres, stations' elevation, its distance to the nearest weather bureau (Standiford Field). Accompanying the report of each night's observations, detailed meteorological information such as hourly temperatures, hourly surface and upper level wind directions and velocities, clouds, etc. These data are helpful in evaluating nocturnal bird flights under varying conditions.



At the next lunar cycle on September 30th, we resumed observations from 7:40 P. M. to 1:32 A. M. In five hours and twenty-five minutes of actual observations, we recorded one hundred ninety-one bird flights, thirty-five per hour.

On October 2nd, clouds covered the sky all day. About 8:00 P. M. a cool northerly breeze had swept the sky clear. We postponed observations until after Karl Maslowsky's Audubon Screen Tour lecture. Beginning at 10:23 P. M., we garnered one hundred sixty-three birds in four hours and twenty-five minutes, thirty-six per hour. Maslowsky observed with us for a while.

In seven and one-half hours on October 3rd only thirty-nine birds were seen to pass the moon, an average of five per hour. With the smaller three-inch telescope of thirty power, an average of four per hour was recorded. On October 4th, in four hours and fifty-six minutes, we saw only twenty birds, four per hour. Skipping October 5th on account of clouds, we counted one hundred six birds in two hours twenty-two minutes on October 6th. The marked difference in the results of this night and of the two previous observing nights, puzzled me greatly. Checking the meteorological conditions, I found that the prevailing winds on the two previous nights were from the south with relatively higher temperatures and on September 30th, October 2nd and October 6th, the winds moved from the north producing cooler weather. I arrived at the tentative conclusion that decidedly fewer birds flew against the wind and many more with the wind. That seems to confirm Robert J. Newman's statement that "The telescopic observations thus far have supported the view that bird migration is profoundly affected by the movement of the air masses. It looks as though migrants tend to travel with the wind toward low pressure areas, just as has been supposed on the basis of other evidences. The correlations to date between migration and air currents have, however, been rather broad and general." (See Paragraph 1, page 35, "Studying Nocturnal Bird Migration by Means of the Moon," by Robert J. Newman).

On the night of October 26th, a few hours after returning from the K. O. S. meeting at Mammoth Cave, I set up the telescope at 7:06 and observed till 9:14. The temperature range was between 64° and 59°. Surface winds were from the south and upper level winds southwesterly. Not a single bird crossed the eight day old moon. Even though an eight day moon would not show as many as a full moon there was a sufficiently illuminated area to enable the observer to see at least 4/7 as many.

On the following night, October 27th, in two hours, spaced in the early and later parts of the evening, nineteen birds were recorded, an average of nine plus per hour. About 7:00 P. M. the wind had changed directions from southwest to northwest. The northwest winds brought the birds with them.

During one hour and five minutes, the following night, only one bird was sighted at 10:30 P. M. The winds were southerly and southwesterly.

On October 30th, for more than two hours, I stared at the blank twelve day moon without recording any life. Winds were southwesterly. Apparently no birds were flying against the winds.

One hour's observation on October 31st, yielded one bird. The winds were from the southwest with sixty-three degrees temperature.

I met with similar experience November 1st. In two hours and twenty-four minutes, I saw only one large bird and one bat. The winds came from the south and southeast, and in the upper levels from the southwest with unseasonal temperatures of 65° to 58°. I skipped November 2nd, because of clouds.

November 3rd, however, showed that the fall migration was not really over. With northwesterly winds which had brought down the thermometer to 38°, I recorded sixty-two birds in two hours and twenty-four minutes. Since I recorded my own observations, I may have missed seeing several. The wind direction and lower temperatures induced the birds to ride the waves of the air currents toward their winter home.

The next full moon period was December 31st. No bird flights were recorded in one hour and five minutes of observation. Was the fall migration period at an end now that we had passed the winter solstice? I was convinced of this the following night, when no bird was seen during an hour with eye glued to the telescope. New Year's Eve was cloudy. So, to make up for it, I spent an hour at the scope on New Year's night January 1, 1953. The weather was cool, winds were from the north. The lack of birds could no longer be blamed on wind directions, the fall migration was no more.

To summarize: During the summer and fall seasons we observed on twenty-nine nights for an aggregate total of 85¼ hours of actual watching at the telescope. In 1948, ours was about one of thirty stations. In 1952, according to a report from Dr. George H. Lowery, observations at no fewer than three hundred twenty-five stations with over

twenty-five hundred persons participating cooperated in the fall project. It is safe to venture the opinion that no station furnished data that were more painstaking than those of the Beckham Bird Club. Our reward is the satisfying belief that our contributions, however modest, to the study of nocturnal bird migration may help unravel some of the mystery of seasonal migration. It was a work of pleasure and happy associations.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.** Without the devoted helpful cooperation of many members of the Beckham Bird Club, the work herein described would not have been possible. The following assisted in 1948 or in 1952, or both: Mr. and Mrs. Yancey Altsheler, Hayward Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Brecher, Mr. and Mrs. Otto K. Dietrich, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. F. Fleischer, Thomas Fuller, Mr. and Mrs. Frank X. Krull, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey B. Lovell, Burt Monroe, Sr., and Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Patterson, Louis and Marie Pieper, Evelyn Schneider, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Shackleton, Mr. and Mrs. Francis P. Shannon, Mabel Slack, Austin Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Stamm, Mr. and Mrs. William Tabler, Mr. and Mrs. S. Charles Thacher, and Audrey Wright.

## THE PURSUIT OF BIRD STUDY IN NORTHEASTERN KENTUCKY

OKIE S. GREEN, 2529 Euclid Avenue, Ashland

When used in this article the term "Northeastern" is used to cover Boyd County specifically, together with a small area to the south and west in the Little Sandy River watershed. This is made necessary by the fact that Ashland, the largest city of Boyd, as well as the rest of this area, is the headquarters of those few individuals and organizations now active in bird study and allied pursuits.

Since some mention is made of the activities of the Huntington, West Virginia Bird Club, it is well perhaps to state why. This general region is known as the "Tri-state", because Ohio, West Virginia and Kentucky meet at the point where the Big Sandy River joins the Ohio, after fighting its tortuous way through the mountains lying to the south. The cities in this area constitute one large metropolitan area and the interests found in any one are usually participated in by some people from the others. Bird study is no exception to this rule as will be set forth later. It is inevitable that people with kindred pursuits will always associate themselves together when the opportunity exists.

A glance at the Topographical map of Boyd County will reveal it to be roughly 10 miles from east to west and 20 miles from north to south. In elevation it ranges from 500 to 1000 feet above sea level. The county is traversed by innumerable water courses, ranging from the myriad small and precipitous branches which carry water from the steep knobs, to the winding, sluggish lowland streams, such as

the East Fork of the Little Sandy. The Ohio and Big Sandy rivers are boundary streams, to which the runoff from this area eventually finds its way. Many small rivulets empty directly into these two large streams, since some of the bordering land is steep and rugged. Most of this area is cut over, second growth timber land. The major areas of cultivation are along the creeks and rivers, in the bottoms which border them. The hills or knobs, which constitute the major portion of the county's land surface, are therefore a mixture of second growth deciduous and evergreen woods. White, black and chestnut oaks predominate, with hickory, ash, gum, pitch and loblolly pine, liberally interspersed. Along the streams one may find sycamore, willow, birch, poplar, wild cherry, beech, and box elder. Shrubs common to each location are found in profusion. Adjacent to the many deep and rocky ravines, which are found here, numerous types of mosses, lichens, and ferns abound. During the spring season this is one of the most beautiful spots in the state, with its slopes and creek-sides a riot of color from such shrubs as redbud, dogwood, "sarvice," and azalea, together with the many species of herbaceous flowers, which fill all the countryside with innumerable spots of breath-taking beauty.

In the low lands, close to the water table, many swamps and marshes have persisted, filled with aquatic life. Now and then, abandoned farmsteads are found in the more remote areas with their ancient orchards and weed fields.

In all seasons of the year this area is possessed of a natural, haunting beauty which is enhanced by a varied bird population. One may find several types of habitat within the county's different sectors and range of elevation. From the shore birds on the Ohio River sand bars, to the Great Horned Owl in the knobs, there may be found a great variety of species. During migration the creek valleys serve as natural highways for the passage of migrants. The region is then virtually alive with all kinds of birds, particularly the warblers. These continental travelers apparently are drawn to these valleys by the combination of water and food.

Much of the city of Ashland consists of wooded areas. Central Park is a 52-acre tract of huge, virgin trees, situated in the center of the city, and it and many other areas offer suitable habitats for birds. Within the city many people feed the birds and have a casual interest in them, yet there are few who can name any except the "redbirds and sparrows." Even such minor interest is commendable and may lead to further activities if properly stimulated.

No organization on the adult level exists at present in the city or county which is devoted to the study of wild birds or nature, in any form. The neighboring city of Huntington has a bird club, which is the closest nature society.

For many years several individuals have been consistent bird students, but for the most part neither knew the other. In a few

cases Ashland people have become associated with the Huntington club. No concerted effort to set up an organization has ever been made. Progress is being made by several people working in co-ordination with the Boy and Girl Scouts and Junior Audubon Clubs. In the years since the Second World War many young people have become interested and junior activity is at an all time high. The next few years should find a nucleus in this group of people. The author is serving as counsellor on Nature and Conservation to both groups of Scouts and is confident that the development of interest in the young of today will result in a greater understanding of natural history in the adults of tomorrow.

In conclusion, it is our intention to set up an organization among the interested bird students in this area in the near future, we hope during the year 1953. This article has dealt in generalities. It will be the object of future ones, to deal with specific phases and field studies connected with bird work in this, the Northeastern sector of our state.

## FIELD NOTES

### INDIGO BUNTING PARASITISED BY A COWBIRD

By JAMES W. HANCOCK, Madisonville

On May 24, 1948, while following a singing male Blue-winged Warbler in scrub growth about 3 miles southwest of Madisonville, I came upon the nest of an Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*). The nest contained 3 eggs of the owner and 1 of the Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*).

May 28: Still 4 eggs in the nest. Parent bird not seen in act of incubating but eggs warm. I unintentionally cracked one Bunting egg while examining it, but did not remove it.

June 2: One young Indigo Bunting and 1 young Cowbird and 2 unhatched eggs in nest; parent bird brooding young. The Cowbird appeared huge compared to its tiny nest companion.

June 9: Cowbird still in nest and almost filling it, but the nestling Bunting had disappeared. The Cowbird had grown very rapidly and was rather well-feathered. It showed signs of fear and floundered from the nest. I replaced it 4 times before I finally got it to stay. The 2 remaining eggs appeared not to be cracked. Obviously the one that had hatched was the one I cracked slightly on May 28.

June 10: Only 1 infertile egg in nest at 6:00 A. M. and Cowbird was gone. There was no sign of the other egg beneath nest. The nest was made of large grass blades, small leaves, small weed stems and lined with fine grass.

Friedman (*The Cowbirds*, 1929, pp. 230-231) records the Indigo Bunting as "A very commonly imposed upon species... Ordinarily it is not known to try in any way to rid itself of the strange eggs so

frequently foisted upon it, although one instance has come to my notice of an Indigo Bird burying a Cowbird's egg which was deposited before it had any eggs of its own.

"Dr. A. H. Cordier found a nest of this bird containing young Indigo Buntings and, on top of one of them, a fresh Cowbird's egg (unpublished record)."

The Indigo Bunting is probably a more common victim in Kentucky than published records indicate. Probably many records of parasitism, made by reliable field students, have simply not yet been published.

### THE NEST OF A TURKEY VULTURE

By DAVID M. BIGELOW, Evansville Public Museum, Indiana

One warm spring day in late March, 1952, my wife and I drove down into Kentucky to do a little exploring along Green River. Just south of Beech Grove, Kentucky, there lies a long, commanding ridge. It is heavily wooded and occasionally studded with bold outcroppings of limestone. We drove up an old carriage road until we could go no farther. Here we unpacked our collecting equipment and picnic bags and started down the trail.

Zebra swallowtails had freshly emerged and were flying among the pawpaws. Here and there a bedraggled mourning-cloak butterfly, just out from a winter's hibernation, had settled upon the damp leaves to quench its thirst. Bloodroot, Dutchman's breeches, rue anemone, and wild ginger were just pushing through the forest floor. Our trail led along a winding ledge of rock under which we gathered several dusky and red-backed salamanders.

Suddenly we found ourselves in a rocky glen with towering masses of limestone rising sharply among the trees. Here and there was a dark crevice. We peered into every inviting cranny to see what mysteries would lie within. Across the glen we spied a very black opening near the base of a thirty-foot cliff. We were curious to investigate. Finding a secure foothold, we were able to peer in. Suddenly there was a loud hissing sound that never ceased as long as we were there. An extremely foul odor permeated the air. We struck a match to light the interior. Two very large white, spotted eggs lay directly before us among the loose gravel and sand. In the far corner, trembling but with her back turned toward us stood a Turkey Vulture. We decided to return at a much later date when the eggs would be hatched.

Again in May, Mrs. Bigelow and I returned with six members of our Museum Nature Trails Club. They had been promised a chance to see the young Turkey Vultures. When we reached the limestone glen, I gave a boy a flashlight and boosted him up to the cave level, and instantly he called out with great excitement that they were hatched. Two snow-white, downy, little vultures were huddled together and hissing just as their parent had done. Their bare skin

faces hung very low and dejected close to the ground; they were apparently terrified by their human visitors. We were quite surprised to find these young birds so small, for our first visit had been nearly two months before.

We made still another visit early in July and found the young vultures still in their cave, though fully feathered and perhaps soon able to fly. Usually Turkey Vultures will occupy the same nesting site for several years, and Mrs. Bigelow and I plan to accompany various members of our local Audubon Society on several trips to visit the ledge at Beech Grove. We hope to secure a series of motion pictures, as well as black and white stills, which will record the life story at the aerie.

#### RECOVERY NOTES ON A Banded CARDINAL

I have had an interesting report on the recovery of a female Cardinal (*Richmondia cardinalis*) which I banded on December 20, 1951.

The bird was trapped on our back porch where a Potter trap had been placed because of snowy weather. It was banded No. 50-138628. No further thought was given to the bird until a note came from Mrs. Amelia Laskey of Nashville, Tennessee, and I am indebted to her for the following information:

The Cardinal was found roosting in a wood shed at Ridgetop, Tennessee. This is about 20 miles north of Nashville and approximately 165 miles from Louisville. Mrs. Laskey stated that, "the persons who caught the bird read the number, released the bird but remember only that it was previous to January 1, 1952." Later the same individuals heard Mrs. R. E. Lynn give a talk on bird banding and gave the information to her, which she in turn sent to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Normally, we think of Cardinals as being more sedentary in their habits. Yet, some individuals surprise us and make rather long flights. Mary Thatcher Cooke of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service had an interesting note, "Cardinals Not Always Sedentary" in the April 1946 issue of *Bird Banding*. She cited eight records that "have come to light as a result of bird banding" where individuals had been recovered at distances of from 35 to 200 miles; and I noticed the time which had elapsed between banding and recovery of the bird was from 36 days to more than a year's time. The cardinal which had been recovered 36 days after banding had been found dead at a distance of about 35 miles from the place of banding. No. 50-138628 was recovered within 10 days or less from the banding date and from available records seems to have traveled farther or a greater distance in a less period of time than others of the same species.—ANNE L. STAMM, Louisville.

### NOTES FROM REED, KENTUCKY

A dead Virginia Rail was found in a driveway on April 21, 1953. This is a fairly early date for this not too common bird in this area.

We noted a Brown Thrasher in our yard acting very excited under a Japonica bush. It was pecking furiously at something. A few minutes later we saw it raise a 26-inch snake several inches off the ground, quite a feat for a bird the size of a thrasher. We destroyed the snake and later observed the bird carrying worms to a brood in the bush.

On April 25, 1953, we observed two pairs of Robins and one pair of Mourning Doves building nests in the same California privet.—MRS. NAT STANLEY, Reed.

\* \* \* \* \*

### BROWN THRASHER SWALLOWED BY A SNAKE

Recently we saw a Brown Thrasher fluttering around a dark mass in a shrub close to the window of the Audubon State Museum at Henderson. We discovered that the brown mass was a snake. The bird was not making any outcry, just fluttering around aimlessly as if fascinated by the snake. The snake was killed and was found to have swallowed another Brown Thrasher, perhaps the mate of the live one. We could not help wondering how the snake was able to catch such a large and vigorous bird as a thrasher. Although bird students often suspect that snakes have killed birds that they were watching, it is not often that they are able to confirm their suspicions.—MRS. ARCH SHELTON, Curator, Audubon State Museum.

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### PINE SISKINS WINTERED AT BOWLING GREEN

Last summer, when I camped for some time in the Rocky Mountains, I did not realize that my daily association with Pine Siskins would so soon be repeated. On December 13, 1952, I thought several times that I heard a siskin or two among some small flocks of Goldfinches. Several other times I heard a strange note but could not isolate the bird. Finally, on February 21, 1953, I saw at close range twenty to thirty siskins, right among contrasting Goldfinches. After that there was never a week and rarely a day that I did not see and hear them until May 8, when the last one was seen in the town. There must have been hundreds inside the town itself and smaller numbers in every part of the county where I walked and observed birds. I found a few at Mammoth Cave National Park on March 28 and again on April 26. Numerous local observers recorded them day by day, especially in March and April. I was able to teach several people the strange rasping note of the bird, which is the best way to detect its presence, as it so often acts and looks at a distance like the better-known Goldfinch. Letters from many bird observers indicate that the winter of 1952-'53 brought more Pine Siskins south than have ever been recorded before.—GORDON WILSON, Bowling Green.



## AN ALBINISTIC CARDINAL

On December 6 and again on December 22, 1952, I saw at close range an albinistic Cardinal on the farm of Miss Florence Schneider, some four miles from Bowling Green. The bird had only a few pinkish feathers in the crest, the outer primaries, and the tail. It seemed to be as large and active as the normal Cardinals that were all around it.—GORDON WILSON, Bowling Green.

## NEWS AND VIEWS

Mr. Louis Pieper, a life member of the K. O. S., who for some time has been supervisor of the Accounts Payable Department at the Louisville Branch of the Ford Motor Company, retired on June 15, 1953. He has been with the firm for 37 years. He plans to have time for some of his hobbies and to attend the University of Louisville this fall and study Zoology.

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K. O. S. members who attended the thirty-fourth annual meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Club which was held at the University of Michigan Biological Station on Douglas Lake, Michigan, are as follows: Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Brecher, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Mengel, Mr. and Mrs. Burt L. Monroe, Sr., and Mr. and Mrs. Frederick W. Stamm.

Members reported much interest in this meeting and especially in the field trips which gave them an opportunity to view such nesting species as the Tree Swallow, Kirtland's, Black-throated Green, and Parula Warblers, American Redstart and the Vesper Sparrow.

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The photograph of the Canada Geese in the last issue was taken by Mr. E. C. Selle, Henderson. These were two injured Geese that were placed on a farm pond for protection by the federal warden (See article by Mr. Rhoads).

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## BOOK REVIEWS

WILSON, GORDON, 1953. *Birds of the Mammoth Cave National Park*. 28 pages, 10 photographs, 1 map. This is a revision of a previous booklet. After an introduction describing the changes that have occurred since the establishment of the park, Dr. Wilson tells where to look for birds in the area. He then discusses some distinctive birds of the park such as the Cardinal, Pileated Woodpecker, Scarlet Tanager and the warblers. Table I shows species that have declined in numbers, Table II, species that have definitely increased, and Table III species that have changed but little since 1937. Thirty species have declined compared to only 8 species that have increased in abundance. The birds are then divided into permanent residents, summer residents, winter residents and transients, a total of 176 species. The rest of the booklet consists of an annotated list of all species of birds which have been recorded either in the park or at

Bowling Green which is only 25 miles from the park. This list is one of the most complete ever compiled for any part of Kentucky and is a very valuable aid to any one studying birds in almost every part of the state. Every Kentucky ornithologist will want one for his shelf of bird books.

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**CUMBERLAND FALLS MEETING.** The annual fall meeting will take place from October 9 to 11. The chief speakers will be Dr. Joseph C. Howell, "The Measurement of Roadside Bird Populations," and Dr. Maurice Brooks, "The Southern Highlands as a Place for Bird Study." Other speakers will be Dr. Gordon Wilson and Albert F. Ganier. Reservations should be made by October 1 for DuPont Lodge. There are also cabins both in and near the park. An unusually fine camp site with showers will be available for members who prefer tent camping.

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**FOUR-YEAR INDEX.** When we published the index to volumes 21 to 24, we promised you another 4-year index for volumes 25 to 28. This is now ready with a title page and may be obtained either from the secretary or the editor for twenty-five cents. About 15 persons had the other 4 years bound, and it is hoped that many more will have the current 4 years bound as one volume. The editor will arrange this for \$2.00; so send him your file of KENTUCKY WARBLERS from 1949 through 1952. Better still, bring them to the Fall Meeting at Cumberland Falls. We shall be glad to furnish missing copies to members at the special price of twenty-five cents each.

There are still some copies left of the *Bibliography of Kentucky Ornithology*, which may be purchased for \$1.00 post paid from the Secretary. There are also a few Check-lists of Kentucky Birds cards available at 15 for 25c, or 35 for 50c, or 75 for \$1.00.

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**COVER PICTURE.** Nests of a pair of Robins and a pair of Doves on the same branch was observed over a period of several weeks by Amelia Klutey at Henderson. A picture of this pair of nests appeared in the *Courier-Journal* on July 12. A detailed account of the unusual relationships between the Robins and the Doves has been received and will appear in the next issue of this magazine.

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